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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/684,708	10/15/2003	Hideya Takeo	Q77911	3651
23373	7590	12/11/2008	EXAMINER	
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC			MOTSINGER, SEAN T	
2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.				
SUITE 800			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
WASHINGTON, DC 20037			2624	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			12/11/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/684,708	TAKEO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	SEAN MOTSINGER	2624	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 September 2008.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 22-24 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 22-24 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/1/2008, 7/23/2008.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) Other: _____.

Response to Arguments/Amendments

1. Applicants arguments/amendments filed on 10/15/2003 have been entered and made of record.
2. Applicants arguments with respect to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 have been fully considered but are moot in view of the cancellation of all claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

3. Claim(s) 21-22 is/are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as not falling within one of the four statutory categories of invention. Supreme Court precedent¹ and recent Federal Circuit decisions² indicate that a statutory “process” under 35 U.S.C. 101 must (1) be tied to another statutory category (such as a particular apparatus), or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or material) to a different state or thing. While the instant claim(s) recite a series of steps or acts to be performed, the claim(s) neither transform underlying subject matter nor positively tie

¹ *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); *Parker v. Flook*, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); *Cochrane v. Deener*, 94 U.S. 780, 787-88 (1876).

² *In re Bilski*, 88 USPQ2d 1385 (Fed. Cir. 2008).

to another statutory category that accomplishes the claimed method steps, and therefore do not qualify as a statutory process. For example claims 22 claims a method but does not positively recite any other statutory category such as an article or apparatus or transform any article of material.

Allowable Subject matter

Claim 23-24 are allowable. Claims 21-22 would be allowable if the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101 were overcome. Nishikawa discloses an abnormal pattern candidate detection processing method, comprising the steps of: i) detecting an abnormal pattern candidate, which is embedded in a medical image, in accordance with a medical image signal representing a medical image, and ii) outputting at least information for specifying the detected abnormal pattern candidate, wherein the method further comprises the steps of: a) calculating a degree of certainty about malignancy, which degree represents a level of possibility of a pattern being a malignant pattern, with respect to a predetermined region in the medical image, which predetermined region has been set for each of pixels in the medical image, as the degree of certainty about malignancy corresponding to each of the pixels in the medical image, the calculation being made in accordance with an index value representing a feature of a pattern embedded in the predetermined region and in accordance with a correlation between the index value and possibility of a pattern being a malignant pattern, which correlation has been obtained from clinical results. (see rejection for claim 1.) Note the predetermined region is the entire image. Nishikawa does not disclose, forming a distribution image signal

representing a distribution image, which represents a distribution of the degrees of certainty about malignancy in the medical image, in accordance with the thus calculated degrees of certainty about malignancy, each of which degrees corresponds to one of the pixels, and the step of outputting at least the information for specifying the detected abnormal pattern candidate is a step of further outputting the distribution image in accordance with the thus formed distribution image signal. Since this step is not taught by the prior art, claim 21 is allowable. Claim 22 is allowable because it depends from claim 21. Claims 23 and 34 recite similar subject matter to claims 22 and 21.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SEAN MOTSINGER whose telephone number is (571)270-1237. The examiner can normally be reached on 9-5 M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jingge Wu can be reached on (571)272-7429. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jingge Wu/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2624

Motsinger
12/4/2008